

## CHAPTER 3

### History of Ban Tham Santisuk and the Thai Policy

#### Introduction

In this chapter, the settlement history of Ban Tham Santisuk is described, including the KMT activities and the response from the Thai government, which had an irregular but major impact on the development process of Ban Tham Santisuk.

The history of Ban Tham Santisuk can be divided into four periods according to certain political phase markers in the village. Originally, successive Chinese headmen in the village were all appointed by the Fifth army. When the political situation of the KMT soldiers changed, however, the incumbent Chinese headman was replaced in order to meet the new demands of military change and necessity. The first period (1954 – 1964) was under the supervision of General Lee who at the same time was the one of founders of the village. It covers the period from when the villagers arrived in Ban Tham Santisuk to the later arrival of the two Nationalist armies. The second period (1964 – 1975) was under the supervision of a certain Mr. Wan. This period equates to the arrival of the two KMT armies to the period when the hitherto amicable relationship with the Nationalist government in Taiwan froze in 1975. The third period (1975 – 1988) was under supervision of a Mr. Jen, and covers the time from the end of the diplomatic relationship with Taiwan to the disarmament period of the fifth army negotiated between the Thai and Taiwanese governments. The fourth period (1988 – present) follows the official elimination of all KMT military elements from the villages under supervision of Mr. Huang.

### 3-1. First Period of Ban Tham Santisuk (1954-1964)

#### a) The KMT Armies: Move down to Thailand

When the defeated Nationalists (KMT) established the Nationalist government in Taiwan in 1949, two small divisions of the Nationalist Armies, 26 and 93, fled to the Shan State in Burma to later make forays into Yunnan. They organized guerrilla activities and self-defense guards. Their activities became so violent that the KMT armies in Burma were upbraided by UN and pressed for either action in terms of disarmament or evacuation to Taiwan. However, a significant number of KMT armies units disregarded the UN decision. They moved to the hills of the Thai-Burma border and established military bases to keep alive the chance to rebuild their strength in China.

A unit of the military set up their base on Mt. Thun; in the border areas between Thailand and Burma. Original residents in Ban Tham Santisuk came from one of those military bases during this period. Life was difficult, especially for soldiers' dependents, so the military leaders decided to allow all dependents to relocate to the lowlands in Thailand. Three leaders, General Lee, General Yang and the latter's son conducted a survey and then requested the Thai authorities to allow temporary residence in Thai territory<sup>9</sup>. The son of General Yang, now 66 year old recalls,

*"There were many women and elders in Doi Thun where General Lee was positioned. People were killing each other and the fighting was never stopped. Living conditions were so dangerous for women, elders and children that we decided to move them down. We succeeded in getting permission to stay in Thailand temporarily. Then we brought about 400 people from the mountain down here in 1954".*

*(Translation is mine)*

Two sites were offered by the Thai authorities for the temporary settlement.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with one of three members who have set up the village in 1954.

One area had 64 rai and the other had 2000 rai<sup>10</sup>. The small plot was only enough for a residential area, but it was located very near to Mae Sai District. The large plot was enough for agriculture but located in a mountainous area where access to the city was difficult due to distance. Since none of the leaders thought that they would stay in Thailand for a long time, they accepted the small parcel of land for a temporary refuge. Whether the land was large enough or not was less important than the accessibility and convenience of the location<sup>11</sup>. It was more important to find a secure site for their family members and stay in the lowlands in order to keep in touch with the political movement in the region. General Lee, who became the first Chinese headman in the village, explained additionally how he and other leaders made their decisions.

*“I took small land though the Thai authorities recommended that I take another place which was about 200 rai. But that was in a mountainous area and far away from the city. The village had to be near the city to contact Thai authorities occasionally whenever it was necessary. There is also a Chinese saying that “it is necessary to have a water source when you found a village”. There were two small streams within the small village. Thinking of this Chinese saying, I decided to take the small lowland with the good water supply. The land was actually too small to make a living by farming, so we bought pigs and chickens and raised them.” (Translation is mine)*

The Special Publication of 39<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Chinese School (SPACS), written in 1996, recorded that total 603 numbers of KMT Yunnanese arrived in Ban Tham Sansituk in March 1954. 580 of them were military dependents from the mountain and another 23 people were merchants from Mae Sai. Those merchants lived in such poverty in this market city that the KMT leaders allowed them to join the migration process into the village.

<sup>10</sup> “Rai” is a measurement of land, equal to 1,600 square meters.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Mr. Lee.

Although the land was officially granted by the Thai authorities, General Lee mentioned that there was also support from the Thai Monarchy to carry out the migration procedure. The village became one of the earliest KMT villages to be officially recognized during 1950s<sup>12</sup>.

**b) The Thai government Response: Less attention, less intervention and no support**

General Lee, was appointed by the Fifth army to become the headman in the village in 1954. Everyone including the KMT leaders, soldiers, and civilian refugees were exhausted. They had been on the run from enemies and were in a desperate plight for survival. When the KMT Yunnanese were able to finally escape from the battlefield, they had almost nothing with them. What they brought were minor items such as military clothes, shoes, one blanket, or a mattress, none of which were especially useful. The new land also provided little as well being but a small forest and rivers when the KMT Yunnanese arrived. The land was distributed according to the number of households. The size of the land parcel given was based on the family number in each household<sup>13</sup>. Each family made great effort to clear the forest, build a house, and raise pigs and chicken for their living<sup>14</sup>.

During this initial period, General Lee, as the first village headman, made great efforts to establish the village as their temporary settlement. In 1955, one year later after establishment, Ban Tham Santisuk came under the supervision of the Thai military. The Thai Border Patrol Police came to the station in the middle of the village to keep the KMT Yunnanese under surveillance<sup>15</sup>. General Lee

<sup>12</sup> In the same year, the rest of the soldiers and their dependants in the military bases in Mt. Angkhang also came down from the military bases and settled Huo Fei and Yang villages in the Fang district in Chiang Mai (Chang, 1999: 92).

<sup>13</sup> Interview with the first Chinese headman

<sup>14</sup> The houses were made with straw-thatched roves because this type of house was easy to build though it was also easy to destroy.

<sup>15</sup> SPACS recorded that there were two Thai families that lived in that area before the KMT Chinese came. The two families stayed together with the KMT Yunnanese at the beginning, but they were relocated by the Borer Patrol Police in order to keep the KMT Yunnanese under the Thai military's direct control. The Thai families were given 400 baht in compensation and left the village.

requested the Border Patrol Police to provide official documents to legalize the KMT Yunnanese in the village. A temporary ID card with their name, the year of entry and a photo inside was distributed to all the residents in the village. This ID card later made it possible for them to leave the village and even work outside the village during daytime (SPACS, 1996). He also made an effort to organize and develop the educational institutions in the village. A simple plain thatched house was built for Chinese lessons up to primary level. It was all General Lee's responsibility to manage finances, recruit educated seniors as teachers, and source funds for the school's operation.

Needless to say, it was not easy for General Lee to set up the village, arrange official ID cards, organize the Chinese school and deal with Thai authorities. He knew no one, nor had any connections in Thailand. Other KMT villages were also too poor to ask for help. The local Chinese or "Haw" in Chiang Rai were seen as a different group of people. They were perceived as "*immigrants without permission*" and "*not soldiers*" and therefore "*not trustworthy*". Likewise, the local Chinese were suspicious of supporting the KMT Yunnanese and even avoided having anything to do with the KMT Yunnanese at the time. What gave Lee further difficulty was his inability to speak Yunnanese. That his original birthplace was in western China and he spoke a different dialect compounded the difficulty in communication with others. Communication with the Thai authorities was also not smooth. None of the KMT Yunnanese spoke Thai and none of the Thai officials spoke Chinese. Communication between the two sides was carried out in English (somehow), but it was never good enough to discuss anything in detail. General Lee recalled his difficulties and explained how he handled the situation,

*"It was difficult for me to get support to develop the village... I left China so early that I did not know anyone there whom I could ask for financial support and donations for my village. The fact that I came from a different part of China – not Yunnan made it difficult for me to use network as well as communicate with people from Yunnan. I knew that they respected me in a way, but there was a difference between me and other residents, such as the way we thought, the way we spoke and the way*

*we acted and so on... I always needed someone who could speak Thai when I had to contact relevant Thai officials to discuss official issues. I brought two Chinese from Mae Sai to translate. Those two Chinese were not Yunnanese Chinese but overseas Chinese, as I did not speak Yunnanese Chinese. They were engaged in trading in Mae Sai. I very much appreciate their help. Without them, my requests would have never reached the Thai officials and any negotiation would never have brought good results". (Translation is mine)*

### **c) Ban Tham Santisuk: Desperate for their survival**

Although the living conditions became much better than that experienced by the dependents in the mountains, the situation was still bleak and not easy to manage for the all residents in the village. Even after they had obtained official temporary ID cards, their life was never secure nor stable during this first period. Men, most of whom were KMT soldiers, were still fighting against Communists on the Thai border. They came back irregularly to the village and went back to the field soon after. While worrying about their fathers' absence from the home, women, children and elders in the village made a scant living by raising chickens and pigs. The road, which metalled today, was then muddy and unlit. When it rained, the road became unwalkable so that people had to use water buffalos for transportation. Yet, the villagers had only on a few occasions to use this road, which brought them to the city. They were scared to go out of the village where they were in danger of being attacked by local Thais. Sometimes, Thai neighbors came to steal pigs, chickens and other valuables from the Yunnanese villagers. A 64 year old women told of her experience and her feelings at that time.

*"When I just arrived in the village, I was afraid to go out... I remember that I went back home before the sun set, shut all the doors and windows and kept quiet inside. When I went out with some money, Thais came to hit me from behind with a stick. I fainted... my money was gone when I woke up. There were so many Thai people who came to steal things from us. So I stayed inside the house even in the daytime". (Translation in mine)*

The KMT Yunnanese villagers had a self-imposed curfew and stayed at home after 6:00 p.m., only going out from the village on special occasions, such as when they needed to see a doctor, buy feed for their animals, or meet District authorities for their registration.

Fighting never stopped. The living conditions during this period were so fraught that the KMT villagers tended to live day by day. The villager feared that they might have to move to other unknown destinations, instead of going back to China. No longer in control of their own destiny, confusion set in and no-one was able to contemplate an unsure future since no-one was sure what tomorrow might bring: since whenever fighting restarted, the male villagers had to take up arms yet again.

### **3-2. Settlement Period (1964 to 1975)**

#### **a) The KMT Armies: Large number of KMT migration from Burma to Thailand**

The second evacuation took place in 1961. A total number of 4,406 soldiers and dependents went to Taiwan (Chiang, 1999: 319). Many soldiers left the army and settled in countries such as Burma, Laos and Thailand. The Third and Fifth Army who refused to evacuate/disarmed moved into Thai borders and around 2,600 numbers of the Nationalist Armies arrived in northern Thailand in 1962.

The Third and Fifth armies occupied the area where they were stationed and in the nearby border areas between Thailand and Burma. The Fifth Army arrived in Muang Ngam, a border village in Mae Ai district in Chiang Mai. They later were relocated to Mae Salong in Chiang Rai in 1963<sup>16</sup>. The Third Army was divided into two groups; one mainly stationed at Fang District in Chiang Mai, and the other stationed at Mt. Phamong at first and then later relocated to Tham Ngob in 1963 (Prakatwutthisan, 1994: 32-33 and Chiang, 1999: 54). They were temporarily allowed to stay in those border areas to assist in the eradication of Communists within

Thai borders (Estrada, 1988). However, the existence of KMT soldiers on the Thai-Burma border threatened National security in Thailand because it was the nationalist forces who were the focus of the periodic Communist attacks. In order to eliminate the KMT soldiers from the area, the Thai government requested the Taiwanese government to take responsibility for the Nationalist armies. Official meetings were held four times between the two countries and as a countermeasure, the treatment for the Third and Fifth armies in Thailand was discussed during the period 1968 to 1970 (Chang, 1999). After final negotiations, the military leaders of the two armies in Thailand were compelled to go back to Taiwan or surrender their forces in Thailand. Predictably, the two leaders were unwilling to follow the official decision, as they previous had, and demanded land and refugee status in Thailand. In return, they promised to profess their allegiance to the Thai state and to fight against Communism for Thailand and to follow Thai laws and customs (*Ibid.*, 55-57).

### **b) The Thai government Response: Giving a temporary status**

The arrival of the KMT armies coincided with the period of Thailand's struggle to eliminate Communists within the country. For internal security reasons, the Thai government was quite agreeable to the presence of the Nationalist army in the frontier border area. The Thai government approved the proposals from the KMT troops and accepted them on the condition that they only exercised military activities for border patrol, state soldiers, and for self-defense. The Thai government even allowed them to obtain certain supplies for use by its forces operating in the Burmese border area and permission to transport military supplies from Thailand to northern Burma in order to protect Thailand from Communist aggression (Krisan, 1999: 101).

One of the Thai Third Army divisions, 04 Command, was set up to expedite the settlement project in 1972<sup>17</sup>. At the meantime, it supervised the two KMT armies. A total of 13 villages were designated in Mae Aep (Doi Luang) and Phaa Tang (Doi Phaa Mon), as well as Fang and Mae Chan for settlement (Chiang, 1999:66). Nationalist armies and their dependents were separated into several groups and

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<sup>16</sup>According to the Development Center of Civil Servants in Chiang Mai Province in 1994.

relocated to Phaa Tang village (for the members of Third army) and Mae Aeb village (for the members of Fifth army). The KMT soldiers were reliant on drug trafficking for funds and to stop this, the Thai government introduced new economic measures to develop domestic industries. Various projects, such as tea plantations, fruit orchards, vegetable seeding, and animal husbandry were organized. The tea plantation was one of the most successful projects, and later the area became well known for production and a desirable export item from the KMT villages (Krisana, 1999: 240-1).

Public buildings such as health centers, welfare centers and state schools were constructed in the KMT villages and all children in the KMT villages were obliged to go to Thai schools. By giving Thai education to KMT children, the Thai government hoped that the military element would be eradicated from the villages. All Chinese schools in the KMT villages were ordered to close, or otherwise, to register as legal Thai school and operate according to the national educational curriculum<sup>18</sup>.

There was a clear political motive behind the Thai policy toward the KMT armies. Considerations of the national security were the key factor in promoting a somewhat tolerant policy to the KMT villagers. During the 1950s, the Thai government was the only country aligned with the Capitalist West in the region which had come under the influence of Communism. Because of its location, surrounded by communist influenced countries, there was always the danger of infiltration by Communist aggressors, particularly in northern Thailand. The existence of KMT armies on the borders was, therefore, an important bulwark in the northern security apparatus, providing fully armed units to battle Communist insurgents (Ibid., 129).

In fact the settlement projects were well supported (by the Thai government) *co-incidentally* at the very time when Mao Tse Tung Communist insurgencies became frequent at the beginning of the 1970s around the area where the KMT troops took control. Following the agreement between the Thai government and Nationalist

<sup>17</sup> They have been under the supervision of the Thai Border Patrol Police prior to Bor Kor 04.

<sup>18</sup> Except two villages in Mae Salong and Tham Ngob. The government opened 17 state schools for the children to provide Thai language

leaders, the Thai government recruited KMT soldiers to fight against Mao Communists from 1972 until 1974<sup>19</sup>. A few supplies were provided to them as a compensation for their participation. Totally, some 700 KMT soldiers were given a monthly stipend.<sup>20</sup> While somewhat covertly supporting the KMT armies' activities, the Thai government was also trying to establish official relations with the People's Republic of China. In this sense, the official Thai policy toward the KMT Yunnanese during this period was not in line with its official foreign policy.

### **c) Ban Tham Santisuk: Making a future plan in Thailand**

Burma became a socialist country in the beginning of the 1960s, when the second evacuation of the KMT armies took place. A lot of KMT Yunnanese who fled from Burma had gradually arrived in northern Thailand, including Ban Tham Santisuk village. On the other hand the KMT Yunnanese in northern Thailand were no longer able to enter Burma freely. Borders between Thailand and Burma were strictly controlled to stop the people-smuggling traffic in the region. That meant that the KMT villagers had abandoned their dream of returning to China.

Faced with this situation, the villagers started to work for the village, to make their hitherto 'temporary shelter' a real homeland where they could practice their culture. Though Ban Tham Santisuk was not the one of the 13 KMT villages identified by the Thai government for stabilization, it was given support by the Taiwan government. Organizational improvements date from this period. The position of Chinese headman was handed over to General Wan in 1964. Having obtained financial aid from the Taiwan government, the second Chinese headman was able to improve the village's facilities, such as residential housing, the Chinese temple and the Chinese school as well as village infrastructure. The Nationalist government also provided scholarship for Yunnanese children in the KMT villages to continue studying at higher levels in Taiwan each year, on the condition that students must have finished junior high school.

<sup>19</sup> Chang (1999:64) reported that about 500 soldiers from the Third Army and 200 soldiers from the Fifth Army were sent to Mt. Luang, Mt. Yuan and Mt Phamong to fight against Miao Communists

<sup>20</sup> Total 250,000 baht were given to those recruited KMT soldiers every month.

Gradually the village structure stabilized. The villagers started to adopt long-term settlement plans in Thailand and expanded their local economic activities. Men were given 20 baht per month as a partial supplement to the stipend for their military activities, but it was never enough for them to sustain their families. They went to work as manual laborers, cutting trees, carrying ice and packages in between their duties. Women went for light manual work or housekeeping. Children had to leave the village to find work to support their families when they were old enough to work. The most profitable work available was trading with the Yunnanese in Burma and Laos and other KMT villages in Thailand. According to SPACS (1996), among the many kinds of traded goods, there included: schooling goods, toys, clothes, and so on, the most profitable goods were jade and diamond. Jade trading ran smoothly in the village.

As a result, electricity was installed, the floor of the Chinese school was tiled, and school utilities, including a basketball court were constructed and developed using trading profits. People who had gone to Taiwan also started repay their thanks to the village by sending donations. An assembly hall was constructed, the road to connect the village to the outside was restored, and a well was constructed at the beginning of the 1970s. The first black and white TV appeared in the village in 1968. Though there were only Thai speaking channels, people enjoyed watching TV.

Not only through TV, but through divers other means, Thai culture penetrate the village through the military founded Thai school. Lessons in Thai language, Thai Dance, Thai history, and Thai manners were taught at the military founded Thai school. Annual Thai traditional ceremonies according to the Thai calendar were also introduced to the school. Military teachers brought the students to the Thai temple on Songkran day and explained how to pray, how to “WEI” (to clasp one’s hand to show one’s respect) and how to behave.

However, there was actually no one who forced the KMT students to speak only Thai and to follow the Thai rules at the military founded Thai school. What was emphasized at the school was to learn about the Thai people and Thai culture.

Acquiring “Thai-ness” was not compulsory. In the other word, the Thai government itself was not strong enough to impose control on the activities of the KMT Yunnanese. This period, especially from the middle of the 1970s, was the time the national security on northern borders was most threatened. The Thai government relied on the KMT Yunnanese to protect the state security. In fact, General Wan’s proposal to organize self-defense militias to ensure the village’s security was easily approved by the state authorities who were considering the national security as a whole.

### 3-3. Stable Period (1975-1988)

#### a) The KMT Armies: Increasing opium trade among the region

Just when the nationalist Taiwan government announced that they would not take any further responsibility for the KMT remnants in Thailand, the Thai government recognized the People’s Republic China as the sole legal government of China in 1975 (Krisana, 1999:140). Diplomatic relations between Thailand and the Nationalist government in Taiwan ceased until the beginning of the 1980s and many KMT soldiers withdrew themselves from military activities and returned to life as normal villagers after this official announcement. The KMT armies demobbed to become farmers and traders. They controlled regional trading by escorting all traders who needed to cross the border. This border trading was the major source of income, especially in raw opium and jade stone. In order to make their living in Thailand as well as to finance further military operations, the leaders of the Third and Fifth armies, General Duan and General Lee, were forced to rely entirely on opium trafficking. Opium trading had already been banned by the Thai government, but the illicit trade among KMT troops was tacitly permitted by the Thai government because of the necessity to maintain a KMT military force. This apparent *magnanimity* was partly in return for their contribution in patrolling the northern frontier in Thailand and fighting Communist insurgents in Thailand (Ibid., 126).

In spite of the fact that many KMT Yunnanese had disbanded themselves from the military, the KMT Yunnanese were still often called up for military service by the

Thai government throughout the 1970s, whenever neighboring counties became politically unstable. Insurgence in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam became more active and aggressive, particularly in the late 1970s. Communist insurgents from one of those countries entered Thailand and rose in revolt in Mt. Khaw Khor and Mt. Khaw Ya in Pisanulok. The Thai government issued a draft call for KMT Yunnanese and about 400 former soldiers from Phatang and Mae Aep villages were transported to suppress the rebels (Chang, 1999:66-68). Other individual KMT Yunnanese were also recruited to guard construction work in areas where Communists and ethnic rebel groups were frequently active. About 200 soldiers from the Third army and 300-500 soldiers from the Fifth army were recruited to guard street construction in Naan and Chiang Rai in 1979 (Ibid.,).

#### **b) The Thai government response: Nationalization of the KMT Yunnanese**

The participation of the KMT Yunnanese in fighting during the 1970s and their subsequent success pushed the government to recognize their value and loyalty to Thailand. As a reward, the Thai government announced the provision of status as Thai citizen (Bat Prachachon) to the KMT soldiers, the provision of an alien card (Bat Khon Tang Daw) or the means by which they could finally apply for Thai citizenship, was awarded to their dependents in 1978<sup>21</sup>. Civilian Yunnanese who entered into the country before 1978 were allowed to apply for the alien card or the refugee card (Bat Obphayop) after the responsibility for administering the KMT villages was handed over to the Ministry of Interior in 1984.<sup>22</sup> As for those who entered into the country after 1978, they were classified as Independent Yunnanese (Haw Idsara) which only indicated their temporary stay. Although Independent Yunnanese were officially accorded permission to register their names, the government had still not yet devised a policy to deal with this category of KMT Yunnanese<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> According to an unpublished official document, “The Royal Thai Army, Special Task 327 for KMT refugee” (1986), 178 families (1,002 people) had gone to register their names in 1978 and received their ID card in 1981. In the next year, 282 families (879 people) applied for the second Nationalization, 383 families (1676 people) in 1980, and by 1983, a total of 2,904 KMT Yunnanese had been granted Thai citizenship.

<sup>22</sup> The Special task 327 reports that the number was estimated at 12,697; 7,165 in Chiang Rai, 5,253 in Chiang Mai and 279 in Mae Hong Song.

<sup>23</sup> Special task 327 estimates the number of Haw Idsara in 1991 at 21,899.

The Thai military control over the KMT villages was finally ended in 1984. Por Kor 04, which had been supervising the KMT villages, was reduced in function as only border security (Krisana, 1999: 217). The further the ‘legal status programme’ was implemented with the KMT Yunnanese, the more strictly the Thai government intensified its integration projects. The Thai government tried to teach the KMT Yunnanese how to live properly in Thailand: Thai language, Thai culture, Thai manners, Thai traditions and customs. This “Thai-ness” was directed especially at the young generation, who had the greatest potential to become Thai through a Thai education. Chinese schools in the KTM villages were forbidden their operation and replaced by National schools under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. Only those schools which were able to follow the curriculum, provided by the Ministry of Education, were given permission to teach Chinese at school, up to primary 1- 4 levels - equal to five hours a week, or an hour per day. The use of total ‘Chinese language educational material and curriculum’ (from other countries) was banned. The students were not allowed to study abroad or accept scholarships from abroad. All Chinese schools in the KMT villages were eventually closed between 1984 to 1986<sup>24</sup>. National development projects were also accelerated to provide non-military vocational opportunities.

National highways linking the KMT villages and cities were built in order to facilitate the transport of KMT products into lowland markets, so that KMT villagers could derive an adequate income from valuable legal crops (Ibid., 210). All former KMT villages were required to set up a Thai temple and Thai public hall. Through various projects, the government hoped the KMT Yunnanese would increase their loyalty to Thailand and foster greater political, economic, and social integration into the country.

<sup>24</sup> Krisana (1999:149) reports that at that time, about 135 private schools all over the country had permission to teach Chinese, but they were allowed to teach Chinese only as an elective 5 hours per week.

### c) Ban Tham Santisuk:

When the Nationalist government in Taiwan declared the suspension of diplomatic relations with Thailand in 1975, the position of Chinese headman was handed over to Mr. Jen. Due to the location of Ban Tham Santisuk, there was a mass influx of immigrants from outside including their relatives, local Yunnanese in Burma, Burmese, hill tribes (mainly Akha), and bandits (SPACS, 1996). Those people continued to successively come and leave the village. This turbulent migration from outside made Mr. Jen so nervous that he strengthened self-defense in order to keep the village quiet and peaceful. A 36 year old villager related his memory of that time, when he was still a child.

*“There were only women and children in the village and others were strangers. Some were the Yunnanese and some were not. But we felt that the village was secure since we were protected by the KMT soldiers who were our fathers. There was a tacit feeling of security among the villagers at the time”. (Translation is mine)*

Disturbances gradually subsided following the virtual elimination of Communists in northern Thailand from the early 1980s. Legal status had also been granted to the residents of Ban Tham Santisuk. In accordance with an official proclamation in 1978, those who had fought during the 1970s were granted Thai citizenship and alien cards were given to their dependents. The rest of the residents in the village were given refugee status (Haw Opayop). However, the procedure to acquire Thai citizenship was so complicated that some of the villagers gave up trying to obtain Thai citizenship. Moreover, due to the complexity of the procedure, some people attempted to get their Thai citizenship by bribery. A 36 year old woman told a story when she was applying for Thai citizenship.

*“After I graduated from the Chinese school, I went to Taiwan to continue studying. I was 16 years old and I was already in the process of applying for Thai citizenship. I was called by the Thai immigration office in Mae Sai to complete some documents or have some interview ... I could not go, of course, because I was in Taiwan. I was teaching at a school and could not take a holiday because it was the middle of the semester. I failed one*

*time to go to the office and failed to get Thai citizenship after such a long time... just because I was not there when the Thai official needed to talk to me, everything was in vain. Luckily, I could get Taiwan citizenship instead. I was lucky. But I know that many people waited for a long time to get Thai citizenship. It was quite complicated and I don't know why. People were so desperate to have Thai citizenship that some of them bought it in cash... There were even some people who forged legal ID card". (Translation is mine)*

The Thai Border Patrol Police finally withdrew from the village after Ban Tham Santisuk officially became a Thai village in 1984. The military founded Thai school became a normal Thai school and relocated within a Thai village next to Ban Tham Santisuk. The Chinese school was re-organized where the Thai school previously had been, and was named as "Chinese school in Ban Tham Santisuk". However, the Chinese school had to close in 1986 for a while due to the government's integration policy. Chinese lessons practically disappeared from the village but Chinese teachers kept teaching secretly in many places, such as the Chinese temple, Mosque, chicken/ pig farms, elders' homes, and so on. Villagers recalled their memory.

*"There was a time that we had to go to the Chinese temple nearby the Chinese school to learn Chinese for a couple of years... I think that was for two years 1986 to 1988. I could not go to Chinese school to study Chinese... I put the Chinese textbook in between Thai books so that people could not see it. I was told by my parents to do so... but I myself, did not know what was going on. The Chinese teachers and other villagers were acting as usual. They did not tell me why I could not go to Chinese school. But again, I did not care what the reason was as long as I could meet my friends there" (Translation is mine)*

(The current village headman)

*"About 20 years ago, we could not go to the Chinese school for two or three years. I had to go to the Mosque to study Chinese. We were*

*scattered in many places in the village; some went to the Chinese temple, some went to the Chinese teachers' houses and some even went to pig farms to keep studying Chinese..." (Translation is mine)*

(A 34 year old man)

The Nationalist government in Taiwan lifted the freeze on diplomatic relations with Thailand in the early 1980s, which permitted the villagers in Ban Tham Santisuk to receive further official financial aid and development project assistance from Taiwan. A semi-official organization named the *Free China Relief Association* (FCRA) provided various developmental projects for agriculture, education, medical care, infrastructure, construction, and some occupational projects, up to 1994 (Chiang, 1999: 130). As a result of support from the two governments and endeavors from the young villagers who had gone to Taiwan and the Thai cities to work, the village has become more and more prosperous.

### **3-4. National Integration Period (1988 to Present)**

The KMT armies were normalized through the integration policy of 1984 and the two major military bases in Mae Aep and Phaa Thang were finally disbanded in 1987 and 1989. During the year between the breakup of the military bases, the position of Chinese headman was handed over to the current, fourth such Chinese chairman, Mr. Huang in 1988.

Mr. Huang, has focused his efforts on the issue of ID cards. Though the modification of regulations in 1991 made it possible for Independent Yunnanese to stay in Thailand, they were still considered illegal immigrants and controlled by strict regulation. The problem was that there were actually many KMT soldiers and civilian refugees within the category of "Independent Haw". Owing to the disorder during the 1970s, many KMT Yunnanese had simply missed the chance to apply for a legal ID card. Some of them were given hill tribe ID cards by mistake and some people had no

ID card at all<sup>25</sup>. Mr. Huang contacted the district office and worked with relevant Thai authorities to persuade them to recognize some of “Haw Idsara” holders and hill tribe holders as KMT Yunnanese. As a result of his efforts, those who had been “Independent Haw” were finally able to apply for alien cards during the period between January to June 1994 under the following conditions; they must have been born after 1984 and their parents must have been KMT soldiers or alien status holders. After a long procedure, many villagers were finally given alien cards in 1996.

Thus, even after the self-governing administration of the village was fully handed over to the Ministry of the Interior in 1984, the Chinese chairman and former KMT soldiers still retained significant influence in the village. From the establishment in 1954, the Nationalist soldiers grouping has played a leading part in deciding the village’s affairs as well as identifying the village as their homeland. In this sense, Ban Tham Santisuk, and the KMT villages in general, are neither similar to Thai villages nor hill tribe villages. In order identify further characteristics of the village, the village’s setting will be discussed in the following chapter.

â€¢ ขลิปนรนหาวทัยาลัยเชียงใหม่  
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<sup>25</sup> Minority Regulation Code: 1992, (Thai) Pramuann Kotmaai Rabyap Kyawkap Chumklum Noy Nai Prathetthai in 1992.